

The New Hampshire Soil Tunnel

The New Hampshire Soil Tunnel is a mobile, interactive display that represents a “crawl” through an underground world. This colorful, hands-on educational tool includes images and three-dimensional objects inside the tunnel to illustrate the important functions of soil. The soil tunnel structure consists of five pieces of ½” plywood that fit together with hook and eye bolts. The sides are approximately 72” X 36” and the ends are approximately 36” X 36”. The “roof” of the tunnel fits over the top to close in the structure and make it dark.

Objectives:

- ◆ Educate children about the functions of soil (see below)
- ◆ Promote conservation concepts using the “hook” of a crawl-through tunnel
- ◆ Provide an outreach medium into classrooms that students and teachers will enjoy.

The five important functions of soil illustrated in the tunnel are:

1. *Habitat for organisms (rabbit, worms, etc)*
2. *Water purification (septic-well)*
3. *Waste recycling (dead leaves)*
4. *Medium for plant growth (roots, carrots, etc)*
5. *Material for humans to use as well (gravel miner)*



The structure of the NH Soil Tunnel was created using an enormous amount of volunteerism. Earth Team volunteer and children’s book author and artist Marc Sutherland provided an artistic vision for the design and painted many of the images seen in and on the tunnel. Earth Team volunteer and artist Peter MacDonald built much of the tunnel itself, including carving and crafting items inside the tunnel such as the septic tank and well bucket. We had other volunteers painting and finishing the tunnel as well. Without our volunteers, the NH Soil Tunnel project would not have taken off.

As exciting and educational as the soil tunnel is, the tunnel structure is only one part of the whole *soil tunnel program*. When the New Hampshire Soil Tunnel program is complete it will be designed primarily for one-week classroom visits with additional educational tools that include:

- ◆ Promotional materials including a “virtual soil tunnel” on the NH NRCS web site
- ◆ A complete set of lesson plans that teachers can use to expand upon the images and items in and on the soil tunnel. These lesson plans will be created using current educational techniques and theories, and fulfil some NH science education standards.
- ◆ A storybook/coloring book that explains illustrations and concepts represented in the tunnel.
- ◆ A 3-ring binder of additional resource materials for teachers that can be photocopied, accessed through the Internet, or acquired through other sources.

For more information on the program or volunteer opportunities with the New Hampshire Soil Tunnel contact Laura Morton (603) 868-7581 Ext. 104 or lmorton@nh.nrcs.usda.gov or visit the Official New Hampshire Soil Tunnel Website at www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

The NH Conservation Partnership has many educational resources available to teachers, schools and youth groups. We can provide information, fact sheets, lesson plans, demonstrations, and presentations on the following topics:

- Conservation
- Soils
- Water Resources
- Wildlife
- Forestry
- Groundwater
- Pollution
- Erosion

(Availability of these resources may vary by topic and office.)

For more information about our mission, programs, educational materials, or volunteer opportunities, contact your local NH Conservation Partnership Office:

Belknap County Conservation District
719 Main Street, Room 203
Laconia, NH 03246-2772
Phone: 527-5880

Rockingham County Conservation District
110 North Road
Brentwood, NH 03833-6614
Phone: 679-2790

Natural Resources Conservation Service and
Carroll County Conservation District
The Grindle Ctr, 73 Main Street (P.O. Box 533)
Conway, NH 03818-0533
Phone: 447-2771

Strafford County Conservation District
259 County Farm Road, Unit #3
Dover, NH 03820-6015
Phone: 749-3037

Natural Resources Conservation Service and
Cheshire County Conservation District
Route #12 South, Box 315
Walpole, NH 03608-9744
Phone: 756-2988 Ext. 116

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Telly's Plaza
243 Calef Highway
Epping, NH 03042
Phone: 679-1587

Natural Resources Conservation Service and
Coos County Conservation District
4 Mayberry Lane
Lancaster, NH 03584-3616
Phone: 788-4651 Ext. 15

Sullivan County Conservation District
24 Main Street
Newport, NH 03773-1500
Phone: 863-4297

Natural Resources Conservation Service and
Grafton County Conservation District
250 Swiftwater Road, Room 6
Woodsville, NH 03785-0229
Phone: 747-2001 Ext. 12

North Country RC&D Area Office
719 North Main Street, Room 220
Laconia, NH 03246-2772
Phone: 527-2093

Natural Resources Conservation Service and
Hillsborough County Conservation District
Chappell Professional Center
#468, Route 13, South
Milford, NH 03055-3442
Phone: 673-2409 Ext. 4

Southern NH RC&D Area Office
The Concord Center
10 Ferry Street, Rm. 422, Box 4
Concord, NH 03301-5081
Phone 223-0083

Natural Resources Conservation Service and
Merrimack County Conservation District
The Concord Center
10 Ferry Street, Box 312
Concord, NH 03301-5081
Phone: 223-6023

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Federal Building, 2 Madbury Road
Durham, NH 03824-1499
Phone: 868-7581

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is an equal opportunity provider and employer.